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Direct Legislation Bulletin

January, 1914

ARE YOU IN GOOD STANDING?

The annual report of the League shows that 1913 was a year of strenuous activity. Let us hope that at the end of 1914 we shall have the satisfaction of recording that much has been attempted and something done for the cause of Direct Legislation.

A provincial election is imminent and will afford excellent opportunities for propaganda. Every friend of the cause should take steps to force the discussion of this question at all political meetings. Make the candidates declare where they stand and use every opportunity to educate the voters by the spoken and written word to the importance of this reform.

Literature explaining Direct Legislation, and answering all objections to it, should be put into the hands of every elector.

In order to carry on this work it is necessary that every member should contribute to the funds as liberally as his means will allow.

We demonstrated last year that the League can be maintained by the voluntary subscriptions of members living in Manitoba. Let us continue the good work until we have Direct Legislation in this province. Our financial year ended on the 31st of December, 1913. We hope every member will send in his subscription for 1914 as soon as possible. Those who are able to increase their contributions are requested to do so. The bigger the campaign fund the more effective the fight. We hope all our members will take the hint and send their contributions, large or small, to Robert L. Scott, treasurer, Direct Legislation League of Manitoba, 253 Chambers of Commerce, Winnipeg. Be a member in good standing for 1914.

B-R-R-R-R-R! S-S-S-S-C-T!

We have all laughed at the story of the Irishman who implored his pal to help him "let go" of the wild cat.

The occupants of the Government benches in the Manitoba Legislature seem to be in a similar position with regard to Direct Legislation.

Dr. Montague, E. L. Taylor and Sir Rodmond Roblin tried hard to "let go" of Direct Legislation when the question was brought before the House at this session, but they were neither happy nor successful in their efforts. They did not dispose of the question. They expect to meet it again—and they will.

GOOD WORK BY McPHERSON AND JOHNSON.

C. D. McPherson, M.P.P. for Lakeside, brought his annual resolution in favor of Direct Legislation before the Legislature on January 13th, and supported it with a very able speech.

Dr. Montague replied on behalf of the Government, in what has been called a forcible speech. The principal arguments used by the member from Kildonan and St. Andrews were as follows:—

(1) Direct Legislation would create constant turmoil. The people would be voting all the time.

(2) The people don't vote upon Referendum measures.

(3) It is contrary to the British Constitution.

(4) We have it now (in the form of a general election).

As each of these contradictory arguments was urged with equal force the net result was the answer to the old conundrum, "What would happen if an irresistible force were to come in contact with an immovable body?"

Dr. Montague moved an amendment declaring British institutions to be the best and freest in the world.

Thos. H. Johnson moved an amendment to the amendment to the effect that Direct Legislation is in accord with British principles of government, and made a very effective speech in support of that contention.

S. Hart Green and T. C. Norris, leader of the Opposition, made speeches in favor of Direct Legislation.

E. L. Taylor and Sir Rodmond Roblin spoke against the principle.

On a straight party vote the amendment to the amendment was defeated. The Liberals refrained from voting on the amendment endorsing British institutions and thus by a Government trick Direct Legislation was side-tracked again.

We hope the Opposition will take this matter up again. The Government should be forced to explain why no action has been taken on the petition which was presented last year asking for a Referendum on Direct Legislation.

TELEGRAM TWISTING AGAIN.

We have been pleased to compliment the Winnipeg Telegram upon several occasions for its outspoken declarations in favor of the Referendum.

It is only fair to add that the Telegram generally advocates the use of the Referendum in Great Britain—not in Manitoba.

Why it would be right to use the referendum to decide the question of Woman Suffrage in Great Britain and wrong to use it on Compulsory Education in Manitoba the Telegram has not yet explained.

Now for the twist. Hon. Frank B. Kellogg addressed the Manitoba Bar Association on Jan. 24th. In the course of his address he pointed out that the Initiative and Referendum have not replaced representative government, but have only been used as a corrective to a very limited extent.

This the Telegram construes into a declaration against Direct Legislation, whereas it is really a reiteration of the statement so often made by the advocates of Direct Legislation.

The Initiative and Referendum are not intended to take the place of representative government, but simply as necessary safeguards to be used when representatives fail to represent.

GRAIN GROWERS SOLID.

At the Brandon Convention the Manitoba Grain Growers reaffirmed their faith in Direct Legislation and passed a resolution urging the government to submit this question to the people at an early date.

MEETINGS.

F. J. Dixon is on the road again, preaching the gospel of Direct Legislation. Any member who can arrange a meeting should get busy right away. Let us know the date and place of the meeting and we will send a speaker.

Mr. Dixon will be at Bagot on Feb. 2nd; Otterburn, Feb. 6th; Rosser, Feb. 7th; Poplar Point, Feb. 9th; Keyes, Feb. 10th; Carroll, Feb. 13th; Belmont, Feb. 14th; Brandon, Feb. 16th; Oak Lake, Feb. 18th.

If you wish for a meeting write soon.

ANNUAL MEETING.

The third annual meeting of the League was held at headquarters on January 15th.

It was a very good representative meeting of our city and country members. The treasurer and the organizer presented reports which were adopted.

The following officers were elected by acclamation:

Hon. president, J. H. Ashdown, Winnipeg; president, J. N. Hutchison, M.D., Winnipeg; 1st vice-president, D. W. Buchanan, Winnipeg; 2nd vice-president, John Kennedy; treasurer Robert L. Scott; sec.-organizer, F. J. Dixon. Advisory board (Winnipeg section): T. A. Crerar, M. J. Finkelstein, R. L. Richardson, Hugh MacKenzie, A. W. Puttee, E. Beveridge, G. F. Chipman, W. S. Archibald, E. D. Martin, R. M. Mobius; Manitoba section: Lewis St. George Stubbs, barrister, Birtle; H. L. Montgomery, merchant, Deloraine; N. P. Evans, farmer, McCreary; R. Cruise, M.P., farmer, Dauphin; G. Huntley Malcolm, M.P.P., farmer, Birtle; J. W. Scallion, hon. president Manitoba Grain Growers' Association, Virden; J. S. Wood, director Manitoba Grain Growers' Association, Oakville; C. D. McPherson, M.P.P., editor "Graphic," Portage la Prairie; R. J. Avison, Gilbert Plains; Cecil St. John, Minnedosa.

A number of short inspiring addresses were made and arrangements made for carrying on an aggressive campaign during 1914.

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